

THINGS TO DO • ARTS • REAL ESTATE • DINING

SUMMER/FALL

2005

\$5.95

Park City

M A G A Z I N E

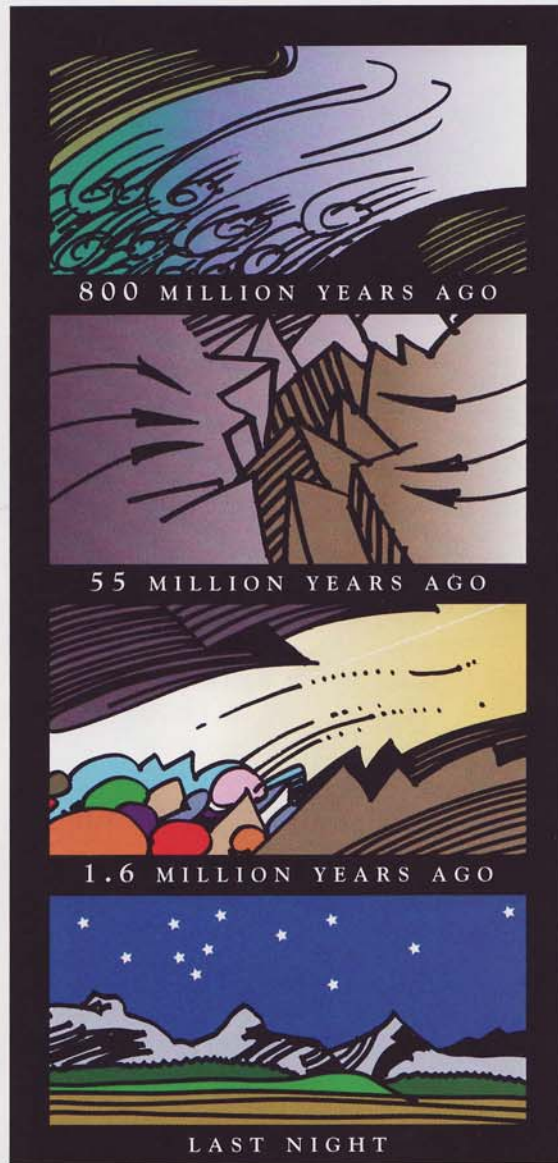


A **Prehistoric** Tour of the Park City Area

Most of us think of historic tours in the Park City area as those we take to the old mine buildings or museums. For a bit of pre-history, however, a drive into the Uinta Mountains is all it takes to really go back in time.

The Uintas are some of the oldest and most geologically unique mountains in the country. One of the most unique elements of the Uintas is that they run east to west, while all other mountain ranges in the western United States trend north to south. The reason for this geographic trend setting is the fact that the Uintas started out as a water outlet. More than 800 million years ago, the Uinta Range was a deep channel where water from an inland sea would flow westward toward the ocean. As water flowed through this outlet, grains of sand-like material were deposited on the channel floor. This channel eventually filled, leaving up to 20,000 feet of sandy sediment in places. For millions of years, the sediment sat undisturbed by geologic process, giving it time to settle and solidify into the rocks we see today.

The next big event in the form-



ing of the Uintas came about 55 million years ago. During this time, the Rocky Mountains were formed by the collision of what is now the western part of the U.S. and the rest of the continent. The compression forced the contents of the ancient channel to be squeezed upward and outward, forming the Uinta Mountain Range.

The final cosmetic touches came around 1.6 million years ago during the last Ice Age. Glaciers covered not only the Uintas, but the Wasatch Range and the mountains of the Colorado Plateau. As these glaciers became larger and larger with more snow, they “flowed” down valleys, acting like plows, files and sleds. These glacial land movers picked up huge rocks, dragging them down the mountain.

Today, we see the handy work of these huge masses of ice in the Uintas in the many small lakes, large piles of gravel, angular fragments of rocks and large boulders stranded in the middle of valleys.

So next time you want a real trip back in time, head to the Uinta Mountains for a prehistoric tour of the area. ☺

— Katie Mullaly

**The history of
the Uinta
Mountains can
be explained
in four concise
chapters.**